MID MICHIGAN ATARI MAGAZINE

july 1986

still .75¢

Rumors

ATARI'S 32-BIT MICRO COMING SOON- Atari has a 32-bit computer in development (the "TT"). The company recently signed a Unix licensing agreement with AT&T and Atari chairman Jack Tramiel has indicated that the new machine will run under Unix. When the new computer is introduced, current ST owners will be offered an option to upgrade their machines to use the Unix operating system. It will use a 68020 processor, and an array processor will be available either as a $600 option or built in. The array processor is a WEITEK AP which lists for $2500 now!! 2049 by 2048 pixel resolution with unlimeted choice of colors on the screen at once. All for about $3000. No release date was specified for the new computer, but it may be as early as January '87.

ATARI TO QUIT TAIWAN PLANT- Jack Tramiel is planning to shut down Atari's production line in Taiwan. In remarks posted on a bulletin board service after he met with Atari owners in Massachusetts, the Atari chairman said that under the right conditions computers could be constructed in the US with the same cost efficiency as in Taiwan. Tramiel set no deadline for the manufacturing changeover but he did indicate the move was not in the immediate future.

AMIGA DEVELOPERS UNHAPPY- Third-party software developers are voicing their concern over what they perceive is a lack of support and concern by Commodore Business Machines. Many developers have dropped plans to continue Amiga development until they receive some assurances that Commodore will supply necessary development information. Commodore is trying to assure developers and the Amiga dealer network that support will continue regardless of internal restructuring. Last week, Randy Weiner of Amiga Technical Support told developers they "will continue to receive the full support of Commodore. We are not about to 'dump' on anyone. I, for one, understand the importance of such support, and what it means to the future of the Amiga, and Commodore itself."

ATARI PLANNING SUMMER PRODUCTS- Atari Corp. is holding some product announcements from the CES and scheduling them for latter in the summer. Compatible with the ST product line, the new products will include a 3.5 floppy with 10MB storage capacity, a super-hi-res graphics board with 1,000 line resolution and a new sound chip. Other new products are memory and multitasking upgrades as well as a new expansion box for holding the multiple upgrades.

BATTERIES INCLUDED TAKES STOCK- Michael Reichman, president of the successful Canadian software firm Batteries Included, announced a merger with ITM Corp. This means Batteries Included stock may be publicly traded on the Canadian Stock exchange. Reichman also said that Russ Wetmore, author of HomePak, has accepted a position with Apple Computers in Cupertino, CA. Whatever he is doing is evidently very hush-hush as Russ said only that he was working in "advanced research production" and would say no more.

Says ANTIC MAGAZINE writer JACK POWELL in one of his CES Trade show reports: "By the way, I'm writing this report outside of the COMMODORE exhibit- it's the only place in the hall where it's quiet enough to concentrate."

MINI-PAWN MOVES ON- The Pawn, the successful -- and difficult -- 520 ST graphics/text adventure, is currently being adapted for the 800 XL and 130 XE and will be released in this country through Firebird Licencees. The Atari 8-bit version of the game will have all the complexity of its ST cousin and the same incredible parser and graphics, but half the graphic resolution. Programmers at Magnetic Scrolls, the technically sophisticated software development group from Great Britain, are playing with the display list to imitate the ST full color spectrum on 8-bit screens.

NEW 8-BIT DRIVES- Atari Corp. is still not ready to announce the long-rumored 3.5-inch drives for the 8-bit line. But reliable sources within the company report that the drives will have a capacity of 325K, formatted, and the Disk Operating System will be compatible with DOS 2.5.

ATTENTION

800XL OWNERS:

RAMASTER

AS REVIEWED BY C.H.A.O.S

256k UPGRADE

130XE COMPATIBLE

$30.00

(ADD $2.75 FOR S&H AND C.O.D. CHARGES)

INCLUDES EVERYTHING

BUT RAM CHIPS-$4ea

313-261-7609

MID MICHIGAN ATARI MAGAZINE

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This publication is the official newsletter of the Capitol Hill Atari Owner's Society, an independent user group of Atari 8-bit and 16-bit computer users. It is intended for the information and education of C.H.A.O.S. members as well as the dissemination of Atari related information. Opinions expressed in this publication are those of the respective author and are not in any way official opinions of C.H.A.O.S.

Other user groups are granted permission to reprint articles from this magazine provided credit is given to the respective author as well as to the Mid-Michigan Atari Magazine.

FUTURE INVOLVEMENT OF OTHER GROUPS

We are soliciting other Michigan Atari clubs to become affiliated with the Mid-Michigan Atari Magazine. We will continue to put out a high-quality monthy magazine, and with a greater volume through mailings to more than just one club, we can achieve MORE pages and LOWER production cost per copy.

If You are involved in an Atari club, show this newsletter to your membership. Your club could be covered in our pages for about the same price per copy to your club as you now pay for a smaller local newsletter. As we also need contibution of articles, no reduction in your local input would occur. Contact us through the Post Office Box listed below.

SUBMISSIONS

Submissions from members are encouraged. If possible, please make your submissions by electronic means. Submissions are accepted on the C.H.A.O.S. BBS, or on disk-by mail or by giving a disk to an Editor. All submissions must be received by the 20th to be considered for the next month's issue.

NEWSLETTER EXCHANGE

We welcome the exchange of newsletters with other clubs. Exchange newsletters, as well as other inquiries, should be sent to:

Mid-Michigan Atari Magazine
PO Box 16132
Lansing, MI 48901

Atari News

ONE FOR THE GIPPER

Per the May 20 USA TODAY. Commodore reported a loss Jan/Mar qtr of of $36.7 million, up from the 20.8 million loss this same quarter last year. Atari made 9 million in the Jan/Mar '86 quarter, normally the slowest quarter of the year...

OKIDATA DEBUTS ATARI PLUG 'N PRINT KIT

Okidata (609/235-2600) has unveiled their new Atari ST Plug 'N Print Kit for the Okimata 20 personal color printer. The new modules connects the Okimate 20 to both the Atari 520ST and the Atari 1040ST series PCs. Atari ST users can now print more than 125 colors, using Okimate 20's special color ribbon, to create high resolution graphics, pictures and professional quality overheads on a variety of media, including acetate.

ON THE 8-BIT SIDE

Atari officially announced the rumored 1200 baud modem at the June CES. According to official sources it will be compatible with both lines of Atari computers.

ICD has successfully tested a new parallel device for the XL/XE AtariComputers.

It presently includes the following features:

RAMDISK - up to 1 Meg in 256K blocks. This device has its own power supply so the RAMDISK contents remains intact when the computer is turned off!

Printer Interface - uses a standard 850 cable to plug into your parallel printer!

Printer Buffer - use any portion of the RAM as a printer buffer (spooler). This also retains data when the computer is turned off!

Serial Interface - a standard 850 type (P:R: Connection type) serial interface except this one uses a UART which allows concurrent I/O through more than one channel at a time! ROM software emulates the 850 handler!

Hard disk interface - supports both SASI and SCSI hard disk controllers. Use any size hard drive and up to 8 floppy drives with the same computer and interface. We will have a packaged 10 or 20 Meg drive with case, power supply, and controller available shortly.

The XM801 dot-matrix printer was shown at CES. It does graphics but has no Near Letter Quality mode. No interface is necessary. Users will have to choose between a cost of less than $200 and paying about $250 for a NLQ printer and an interface.

ST ON THE TV

The new 520ST's have the connection to drive a TV. Also, you can drive a moniter with these if you are willing to build a cable. Reviews are mixed on the quality of the TV display. Some reports are very enthusiastic while others are quite negative.

16-BIT ANNOUNCEMENTS

New and most interesting in the ST software lineup is OS-9 from TLM Systems, Peasantville, NY. This Unix-like operating system for the ST permits true multi-tasking, while providing access to BASIC, C, Fortran and Pascal.

Mark Williams Company demonstrated its C Programming System, a powerful compiler with a set of advanced utilities designed specially for professional program development with the ST. It will sell for $180.

ANTIC PUBLISHING INC.,COPYRIGHT 1986.
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ANTIC ONLINE'S REPORT FROM APRIL 1986 COMDEX
(EXCERPTED)

The Atlanta COMDEX is one of 35 high-tech trade shows put on each year by The Interface Group. COMDEX is an acronym for Computer Distribution Exposition, and its focus is to serve the independent distributer of computer products. Organizers expected that there would be 40,000 visitors at the 3,300 booth units, which represent over 700 companies.

Against a backdrop of names like Epson, AT&T, Panasonic, Zenith, and IBM, Atari and Commodore waged a battle for 16-bit supremacy. Commodore's Amiga exhibit would have won the prize for "best float" if COMDEX was a parade. This could be seen as a reaction to that company's absence from the last COMDEX in Las Vegas, when Atari scored innumerable hits with its roundup of third-party developers for the ST. This time Commodore answered in kind, with an armada of impressive Amiga programs.

Meanwhile, Atari bolstered its image with a gathering of products for its 8- and 16-bit computers.

2,000 ST developers worldwide are expected to bring a bonanza of products to market yet this year. Atari is making a point about the number of programs available for the ST computers, and has issued a $10 "ST Software Catalog." The catalog lists 21 word processors, 16 databases, 7 spreadsheets, 25 financial programs, 16 communications programs, 22 graphics, 10 music, and more than 200 other programs for the Atari ST.

New and most interesting in the ST software lineup is OS-9 from TLM Systems, Peasantville, NY. This Unix-like operating system for the ST permits true multi-tasking, while providing access to BASIC, C, Fortran and Pascal.

CAD-TYPE PROGRAMS

Several graphics products attracted attention. The Graphic Artist from Progressive Computer Applications, Inc., claims to be a new category of software, beyond Computer-Aided Design (CAD). While providing full CAD features, The Graphic Artist also contains complete business graphics and text-handling systems with built-in and modifiable fonts. Using this product, a single worker can produce professional monochrome documents containing accurate graphic elements to

any desired scale alongside any desired text. The package sells for $495 and is available now. Optional command language is $245 additional.

Easy Draw, by Migraph, lacks some of the power of Graphic Artist, but only costs $150, while retaining quite impressive abilities to create B&W and color drawings of great accuracy and detail.

An unusual CAD product is the PCBoard Designer distributed by Abacus Software (of Grand Rapids, MI). This monochrome program attempts only to facilitate the frequent need to design printed-circuit boards. The program's library contains a reasonable selection of electronic devices, and users can add their own if needed. Move these to the work area and arrange as desired; specify the connections and they are made automatically. The traces are marked out in several widths with proper spacing. PCBoard Designer costs $395.

CAD-3D, by Tom Hudson, makes it easy to create three-dimensional objects of great complexity, and examine them from all sides as wire-frame or solid models in monochrome or color under several different lighting conditions. Saving successive frames in RAM or on hard disk enables effective animation of the object. CAD-3D is available from Antic for $49.95.

FILE SERVER

A file-server system for the Atari ST computers was shown by BMB Compuscience of Canada, Ltd. The server is actually an IBM clone (a Compaq in the demonstration) dedicated to the task. With a 20-megabyte hard disk onboard and a $895 card installed, the server can accomodate 63 computers which must be either IBM compatibles or Atari STs equipped with BMB's interface box. The interface costs $495 and will be available in July. This sounds like an expensive way to set up a local area network, but it is quite reasonable compared to the cost of using all IBM equipment. When connected to the file server, each computer has its own assigned space that can be protected with a password of the user's choosing. Depending on the permissions of the network manager, each user may also read from or write to other users' space, and even exchange data and programs if the formats are compatible.

Atari News

THUNDER (!!!!)

Thunder, from Batteries Included, is a desk accessory for the GEM Interface that checks spelling in real-time. It also expands abbreviations, and analyzes statistics for a given document. The program can ring the system bell whenever a typed-in word does not match a dictionary word. The writer can then correct any obvious error, or if stumped, call up a sophisticated series of replacement words from

the dictionary. The expansion feature makes it possible to set up several hundred abbreviations (5K worth), which when typed into a document are automatically expanded to full length. For example, BI could stand for Batteries Included. A small repertoire of abbreviations is provided with the program. The analysis feature counts syllables, syllables per word, total words, sentences, words per sentence, and performs some tests - such as percentage of words with more than three syllables. It also calculates a FOG index and a Flesch index and tells the writer the educational level required for the average reader of the document. Thunder is compatible with many GEM-based document programs. It costs $39.95 (WOW!!!) and will be available July 1.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

Batteries Included also introduced the Isgur Portfolio System (IPS) for securities management. This includes complete data for all equity investments, including total value, gains and losses of the portfolio as of the last price updating. A full-featured telecommunications section of the program, called I$S Talk, automatically calls Dow-Jones, CompuServe or other services for prices and posts them to the individual security records. You can cause it to signal you when preset criteria are met (e.g., "signal if stock decreases 10%"). Dozens of special features make IPS a program that must be seen to appreciate. It will be available June 5 for $199.

Dac-Easy is a powerful but inexpensive accounting program ported to the ST from the IBM, in which version it was named Product of the Year by InfoWorld in 1985. Amazing as it seems, this fully implemented and integrated "business tool" costs $69.95. It includes general ledger, accounts receivable, accounts payable, purchase order control, billing, inventory and forecasting. It does not include payroll or taxes. It was designed by three CPA members of the company and is the tool Dac Software Inc. uses to do its own multi-million-dollar-a-year accounting.

While many companies have jumped on the ST bandwagon, ICD has been quietly churning out important hardware items for the 8-bits, including a straight-connect modem cable for $14.95, a low-cost printer connection for $59.95, and The P:R: Connection, a replacement for the Atari 850 modem interface. The P:R: Connection ($89.95) is a small boxwith one printer port and two modem ports. It gets its power from the computer and works on any Atari 8-bit machine.

Yes, now you can have a 1-megabyte 130XE. The ICD Multi I/O Board plugs into the parallel bus port and sells for $199 for a 256K version and $349 for a 1-megabyte board. Included in the board are a parallel printer interface, a serial printer/modem interface, a printer spooler and a hard disk interface. According to ICD, a standard hard disk can be used with either a SASI or SCSI controller card. The product is also compatible with the Supra hard disk.

ICD's display system was configured with two hard disks and one floppy, with built-in software permitting segmenting of the hard disks. The screen displayed four hard disks at 260K, 10Mb, 9Mb and 3Mb, plus three RAMdisks at 192K, 256K and 512K; and finally the one floppy. Oh yes, and a 64K printer spooler. ICD said that any DOS can be used with the Multi board. The whole thing sounds like a dream come true for 8-bit power freaks.

MICRO RTX- Atari ST Real-Time Multitasking Operating System Kernel, MICRO RTX, is exactly what the Atari ST programmers have been asking for. A fully multitasking operating system AND complete TOS compatibility! MICRO C-Shell was the first professional software development environment for the Atari ST. Now Beckemeyer Development Tools has done it again- a reliable multitasking extension to the TOS operating system. Some of the features are TOS Compatibility, complete GEMDOS and BIOS Compatible I/O System, true Real-Time Performance, software control of Priorities and Time-Slicing, event signaling - supports asynchronous events, interprocess message passing via FIFO Queues, timeout options on all message and event services, adds forks and real Pipes to GEMDOS, supports multiple users via RS-232, MIDI, or DMA, High-Level and Assembly Language Interfaces, easy to use services.... and more.

Amazingly, the MICRO RTX kernel is only 16K! MICRO RTX is completely independent of the user's application. There is no linking required. An easily maintained configuration file is used to control the number of active processes and other static declarations. The maximum number of processes is limited only by the available memory. MICRO RTX includes a comprehensive 46-page manual, and sample source code. Assembly language source code to the C bindings is also included. Suggested Retail Price: $69.95 From Beckemeyer Development Tools, 592 Jean Street #304, Oakland, CA 94610

CAPITOL HILL ATARI OWNERS SOCIETY

MEMBERSHIP

Membership dues are $12.00 per year and entitle the member to a 1 year subscription to the newsletter, a free disk from our regular library, access to our other libraries and facilities as well as access to our other resources.

Dues may be paid at any regular C.H.A.O.S. meeting or by mail. If not using an official Membership Application, please include your Name, Address, Phone and a list of your equipment and interests.

BULLETIN BOARD SYSTEM

Sysop John Nagy and C.H.A.O.S. invite you to call one of the country's finest BBS's at:

517-371-1106

INQUIRIES

Inquiries regarding C.H.A.O.S., mail orders, memberships and etc, should be sent to:

C.H.A.O.S.
PO Box 16132
Lansing, MI 48901

MEETINGS

Meetings take place on the 2nd and 3rd Saturdays of each month, at the MSU Astronomy-Physics Building, Physics Road, Room 118. Meetings begin at 10:00 am sharp and last until 1:00 pm.

S.T.IN.G. (S.T. INterest Group), for Atari ST owners, meets on the 2nd Saturday of the month.

The General meeting, for 8-bit Atari owners, takes place on the 3rd Saturday of the month.

DIRECTIONS TO MEETING PLACE

East Grand River to the Collingwood Entrance for MSU. The first available left turn is Physics Rd. The Physics-Astronomy Building is about 1 block from the corner, on the right hand side. Park in the gated lot just past the building.

PIRACY

Piracy and illegal copying of software is not condoned by C.H.A.O.S. nor allowed at any club sponsored function or activity.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

by Leo Sell

Welcome to the Inaugural issue of the Mid-Michigan Atari Magazine. C.H.A.O.S. is now publishing its own, independent newsletter in order to better serve our members. Look for more help, more news, more programs and more ATARI than ever before. This brings to mind, however, the need for membership participation. Now, more than ever, we will need your help. We need your ideas, your questions, your articles, etc. This is your newsletter.

I'd like to welcome our new Newsletter Editor in Chief, Jeff Bone. Jeff was very active in the highly successful Computer Show last month. He has a lot of talent and we expect great things. Thanks for volunteering Jeff!

Speaking of the show...

The Mid-Michigan Computer Show was a roaring success - attendance-wise, financially and for the vendors. Several vendors in fact, have already signed up for the next show.

Yes, the first show and sale of its kind ever held in Lansing, went over real big. It seemed that during the planning, every time I received a report, they had been forced to rent additional room because tables just kept selling and selling. In fact, at the end they were very near to having to turn vendors away.

Attendance was over 1800 people. Many found incredible bargains. Even C.H.A.O.S. had a special Show disk for only $1.00. (Sorry, it was only available at the show). C.H.A.O.S. had its share of success too. We signed up 10 or 15 new members or renewals, did about $200.00 in library business, got great exposure and our share of the gate was about $400.

For those of you who didn't make it, you missed a fine display of Atari-power organized by John Baker (8-bit) and Mike Clewley (16-bit). The ST more than held its own against the Amiga, with high-resolution pictures, great commercial software, and a midi-syntesizer demo going on most of the time.

The 8-bit table was crowded as always. I don't know what sort of machines those people will buy, but it was certainly difficult walking past our tables. People coming to the 8-bit end of the table were treated to a great display of Atari abilities. It should have generated a fair amount of interest in the "old" machines.

There were a few disappointments, mind you. We were told to expect IBM there with 5 tables and Xerox and several other big names, but apparently it didn't work out. Oh well, there was still plenty to see and bargains to be found.

I personally stuck with cheap... I picked up Snooper Troops II and Return to Castle Wolfenstein, for $5-7. Great games. Picked up floppy disks for 40 cents per disk... Maybe I'll have enough for awhile. Other people found great deals on Printers, parts, books, manuals and so on.

A great deal of thanks are in order. I cannot give everyone proper credit, but I would especially like to thank the following:

The Mid-Michigan Computer Consortium
for getting the ball rolling.

John Nagy, Adam Slonim and Jeff Bone
for representing C.H.A.O.S. so well and for making the show such a success overall.

John Baker and Mike Clewley
for organizing the C.H.A.O.S. 8-bit and 16-bit involvement.

Greg Barr
for his generous donation of "Join the C.H.A.O.S." t-shirts.

Everyone who assisted with the C.H.A.O.S. tables. They are too numerous to list, but I really thank you all.

If you missed this one, don't miss the next. The bargain hunting and the excitement aren't to be missed.

In my CES...Atari Impressions article, I mentioned the stong need for Atari users to lobby software houses. Here are a few of the companies Atari 8-bit owners should lobby. If you own a 400, 800, XL or XE, you should write these companies and tell them you want support for your machine and that you will purchase high qualitiy software for it. You should also let them know that you do not and no one you know engages in piracy, despite the "public" image of Atari owners.

The following list shows names and addresses and a partial list of software being produced for Apple, IBM and Commodore only:

Activision, Inc
Drawer 7287
Mountain View, CA 94039

Little Computer People Discovery Kit, Alter Ego, Borrowed Time, GBA Championship Basketball - Two on Two, Championship golf, Garry Kitchen's GameMaker and GameMaker library, Hacker II, Murder on the Mississippi

Infocom

125 Cambridge Park Dr
Cambridge, MA 02140

Ballyhoo, Trinity, Leather Goddesses of Phobos, Moonmist

Avalon Hill
4517 Harford Rd
Baltimore, MD 21214

Super Sunday, Statis Pro Baseball, Dreadnoughts, Tournament Golf, Spitfire 40', Macbeth, Darkhorn,

DesignWare
185 Berry St
San Francisco, CA 94107

Remember!, Cryptocube, The Grammer Examiner, Mission Algebra, The Body Transparent, States and Traits, European Nations & Locations, The Music Teacher Series

Polarware/Penquin Software
2600 Keslinger, Box 311
Geveva, IL 60134

Comprehend Interactive Novels, Fantasy games

Bantam Electronic Publishing
666 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10103

Shelock Holmes, I Damiano, The Forth Protocol, Know your own IQ/Personality, The Complete Scarsdale Diet, The Cave of Time, Escape, Road Rally USA, Creative Contraptions, Fantastic Animals, Walt Disney Software (Comic Strip Maker, Card & Party Shop

Springboard Software
7808 Creekridge Cir
Minneapolis, MN 55435

The Newsroom, and Clip Art

Weekly Reader Family Software
4343 Equity Dr
PO Box 16754
Columbus, OH 43216

Stickybear: Typing, Spellgrabber, Town builder, Basic, Math II, Printer. Also: Car Builder, Codes and Cyphers

Sir-Tech
6 Main St
Ogdenburg, NY 13669

Wizardry series, Rescue Raiders, Galactic Attack

Review

RAMASTER 256K 800XL Upgrade: BEST BUY

A Review by John Nagy

For quite a while the only "BIG MEMORY UPGRADES" were done by the few, the brave, the tech and hacker-types. But now there are many commercial "EASY MEMORY EXPANSION KITS". 130XE-compatable 256K upgrades for the 800XL are advertised for as much as $100. Several are available at the $50-$60 range... and then you have to buy the eight required 256K RAM chips at anything from $2.85 each (mail order) to $5.00 (at local electronic suppliers). Your total upgrade COULD cost nearly $140 (which, for quadrupling the capacity of your $100 machine really isn't out of line).

Still, it seemed a bit too much money to me, and I pondered the possibilities of marketing my own "bare board" following the plans put in the public domain by CHAOS member Claus Buchholz. The modification was small, but it took a real maze of jumpers, wires, and such. I couldn't imagine it could cost much more than $10 a board to eliminate most of the nasty work, plus parts... the whole thing for under $30 in parts, plus the cost of the RAM and my time.

The same thing occured to BOB CARLINI in Westland, Michigan, but HE did it! In fact, he OUT-DID it with the RAMASTER 130XE compatable 256K upgrade, a super-simple product completely assembled (less RAM) for only $30!! (ABC Consulting, (313) 261-7609, or 35522 Ford Road, Westland, MI 48185)

I ran into Bob one late night on the CHAOS BBS (517-371-1106) where he was checking out all the latest upgrade software and news. The chat that followed resulted in him bringing a really fine video-tape demo for our May meeting. (ATTENTION OTHER CLUBS: Bob can lend or send you a copy of the tape, it shows VERY CLEARLY how ANYONE can do the upgrade.)

The product is a high quality circuit board with silkscreened markers and gold headers (Bob says it costs very little more to go first class). It has all the chips needed REGARDLESS of which ANTIC chip your machine has. Some HIGH DOLLAR kits require you to buy a new ANTIC chip - another $10-$15 - if your machine is a later production model!

His promo material says Bob can do an entire upgrade in 12 minutes (unless it's a rare late production model with soldered chips- Yike!). It's true. I have done five of them now and the longest I took yet was one I did in 22 minutes "on stage" at our big May computer show.... when the soldering iron wouldn't heat. It requires only the barest of talent, one phillips screwdriver, a solder gun, and maybe a small jewelers screwdriver to pry out the old chips. Plug in the RAMASTER and 8 RAM chips, then 6 solder points that couldn't be simpler or better depicted in the very good instructions... and IT'S DONE!!! My Aunt Marie could do it. She's 70, though, and she probably wouldn't.

The RAMASTER is as 130XE-compatable as any upgrade available anywhere for the ATARI 800XL. Software is available through the club, the BBS, and commercially that makes use of the extra memory space, making your XL TWICE as good as an XE. Most useful are RAMDISK drivers that set the area of memory up as though it was an super-fast (read:instant!) disk drive, or even as more than one disk drive.

All 130XE software recognizes and uses the memory as though it was in an XE. As with other XL upgrades, though, programs that require ANTIC bank switching as well as CPU switching will not perform. TYPESETTER had a problem in one mode but it seems to be only in early release copies. Programmers are wise to this and are avoiding ANTIC switching where possible for 256K users.

Best of all, now you can run BASIC XE (from OPTIMIZED SYSTEMS SOFTWARE, OSS) and still have room for a full size ramdisk! ATARIWRITER+, SYNFILE, SYNCALC, etc. have been updated to use the extra memory, although some use only the XE-size 128K (but that multiplies the available file room by a factor of as much as 10!!!).

Bob is offering bare boards and unassembled kits for lower prices (for the diehard tech!!). RAM is also available from him if you dont want to chase it yourself. Check his ad in this magazine for details.

In all, I can't say enough good about the RAMASTER kit. The price is the lowest ANYWHERE and the quality and ease of installation can't be beat at any price.

NOTICE TO CHAOS CLUB MEMBERS ONLY!:
A limited number of RAMASTER's complete with the 8 RAM chips and a diskful of software and documentation is available direct from CHAOS for $50 total! Hurry!! Also available: 288K kit with instructions and software for the original 800 (!!!) that works with SYNFILE and SYNCALC like an AXLON board... and you choice of upgrades for the 130XE: 320k for $35, 576K for 60$, 1088k for $110, each with full instructions and software. (These are not as easy as the RAMASTER!) Contact me (John Nagy), any Club officer, or ask at the meeting or on the BBS. See the Officer roster on the back page of the newsletter.

Publication Library

by Richard Evans

Check out the Chaos Publications Library! It's a great compliment to the program library and provides information on the Atari for the novice and experienced programer alike. The library now contains about 30 books, several dozen magazines, and 48 months of Atari user groups newsletters from across the country. Our book collection ranges from introductions to BASIC and Assembly Language to the Atari technical hardware notes. Our newsletter collections contain both recent and classic information Atari programing, reviews of Atari software, news on new products, and tips on Atari use. Our magazine collection now includes the last several years of ANTIC and ANALOG as well as selected issues of Compute!, Creative Computing, and other computer related magazines.

The publications library appears at each Chaos meeting. Materials can be checked out to club members for one month.

If there are books you'd like to see added to the library, let us know. Likewise, we're always happy to accept donations of materials from club members.

Following is a partial listing of Chaos publications library books:

Atari Basic - by Richard Haskell
Mapping the Atari - by Ian Chadwick
De Re Atari
Dr. Wackos Miracle Guide to Designing and Programming Any Atari Computer
The Visicalc Book
Kids and the Atari - by Edward N. Carlson
Free Software for Your Atari
Machine Language for Beginners -Compute!
Your Atari Computer - Ian Poole

Plus many more!

So, at the next meeting, see you at the library table!

Industry Report

CES...
Atari impressions
by Leo Sell

Impressive. Awesome. Great. These are the kind of adjectives that come to mind when you see the Atari display at CES. Atari really seems to have its act together at the trade shows...To a point.

One of the striking things was the misinformation common among software developers regarding the Atari 8 bit line. Apparently all 8 bit owners need to contact and lobby the software houses and let them know we are here and we want software for our machines. Don't play dead! Lobby all of the software houses you can. I believe we can make a difference. There are somewhere in the neighborhood of 3.5 million Atari 8-bit owners out there, and I believe that at least 2.5 million of them are actively using their Atari and buying software. One software company mentioned that there are 6 million Commodore owners out ther (I'll bet that includes VIC, 64, 128, Plus 4 and all). From what I have seen, maybe 40 percent (2.4 million) are as active as Atari owners. By this estimation the active ownership is about equal between the 2 machines, which means our making a noise should make a difference.

On happier topics...

While I was disappointed not to see the CP/M emulator, the IBM emulator, the rumored 1200 baud modem and some of the other products that are still vaporware, I did see the new 80 column adaptor for the 8-bit computers. In a word...WWWOOOWWW!!!. When you see the display output you are greeted with a very clean and crisp image (provided of course you are using a monochrome monitor). The screen image was as good as anything I have seen including the monitor on an IBM terminal. It is nearly ready for production, but they are holding it up until AtariWriter Plus has been revised for it. A number of other word processors and products are being revised for it as well. It also has a built in Printer Port. With this adaptor, and the XM series of modems, the need for any other interfaces, including the 850, is eliminated- unless you need genuine RS232 compatibility or a Serial printer port. But those are not common applications.

A myriad of products are being developed for Atari computers, in particular for the ST. Unfortunately, support for the 8-bit was as soft as ST support was strong.

Things were not altogether dismal for the 8-bit line. Some real nice products are being produced and prices are coming down. My favorites were from Hi Tech Expressions and from Baudville. Hi Tech Expressions has products called CardWare and Heartware used to personalize musical animation, paper printouts and computer greetings. Another called PartyWare gives you the ability to customize invitations, hats, games, banners and other party stuff. WareWithAll is a kit of printer supplies to add color and flair to your productions. It should work well for PrintShop as well. Suggested retail prices ranged from $9.95 to 14.95. Great stuff.

Baudville is a Grand Rapids company that is expanding from solely supporting Apple, to other machines including both Atari lines. Their products have not been completely converted as yet, but the software on display was very impressive.

Atari showed the new Star Raiders II. Many of you will recognize it as a re-titled version of a game called The Last Starfighter that never made it past Beta testing.

Covox showed an interesting voice recognition system, capable of being trained to recognize individual voices. A flight simulation like the movie Firefox would be real interesting with this product. Interesting possibilities for programming too.

The brightest spot on the Atari horizon is Britain. Software from Rainbird, Firebird and MasterTronic was incredible.

Artworx is supporting both machines with Bridge 4.0 as well as other titles.

Infocom announced several new titles: Ballyhoo, Trinity, Leather Goddesses of Phobos (a titillating romp through the solar system...Hmmmm) and Moonmist. No indication which machines they will be produced for.

My favorite ST program, hails from Batteries Included. Thunder is a spelling checker that runs concurrently with any GEM application such as word processors. The Comdex Report will give you full details, but believe me, this program is neat, neat, neat!!

A lot of my time was spent talking to developers and getting our address to them for literature on new products and potentially, reviews of new releases. Most were very receptive and know that user groups are their best allies. Responses ranged from "We never send review copies to user groups" to "Heck, we'll put you on our list to do Beta testing of new software." Hopefully the contacts I made will be fruitful for all concerned.

All in all I found CES to be a mixed bag for Atari owners. ST owners can look forward to some great support and programs. 8 bit owners will have to work hard to make that happen for them.

CHICAGO CONSUMER ELECTRONICS SHOW
June, 1986

By John Nagy

Chicago winds and temperatures down into the 40's welcomed us to the Summer CES, but the showings from thousands of manufacturers were hot enough to make up for it. It looked as though all of the 100,000 people that were expected through the 5-day affair came Sunday.

The CES is like a candy store for grownups. Every manufacturer and distributor for electronic entertainment and leisure is there trying to show retailers why they should carry their wares. The result is miles of isles on multiple floors of five buildings full of lavish, seductive displays of almost everything. Home video (both hardware and tapes) was the biggest single catagory, and included a huge section devoted to the PORN market. Car and home stereos of every description ran second in sheer volume. Computers ran third (or forth)... but there were a jillion interesting sidelines.

At CES, computers are for FUN. Games ran everywhere on monitors of every description. And ATARI ruled the show with the largest and busiest display of all (as well as being the largest ATARI display ever put together). The computer and software vendors were (mostly) on the lower level of the emmense McCormick West plaza, and the escalators deposited all visitors smack at the gate to ATARI HEAVEN. MIDI demos blasted fabulous synthesized music while "COMPUTEREYES" gave people a digitized view of themselves. There were maybe 200 wall mounted monitors showing everything from ST graphics to new 7800 game machine entries. Another 30 or so carrels each displayed ATARI 8-bit and ST's running software from ATARI's invited software development companies. The teeming crowd never let up inside the mamoth exhibit. Another area had some of ATARI's biggest coin-operated machines, with long lines waiting for a free play.

The restyled 2600's were stacked to the sky along with the new 7800 game console. Rows of machines were lined up for all to play. The 7800 graphics are a clear step up from the 8-bit computer line, but not all the way to the resolution of the ST line. ATARI had a corner on the FUN, with no one ATARI product being featured more than others. Although many of these same devopers offer high-power financial, business, and utility software, CES is for GAMES.

Does the world need a new ATARI game machine? After all, isn't the computer line enough? That's the thought that ran through my mind as well as through many others when the 7800 was announced. But both SEGA and NINTENDO introduced new machines at the CES to bring their arcade

quality play to the home with units nearly identical in capabilities to the 7800. There appears to be big money and bigger competition in high-end games. SEGA is even bringing out their own computer- for better games.

Moving on away from the ATARI extravaganza, the ATARI ST was seen everywhere, second only to the COMMODORE 128 for showcasing the third-party software. Notably absent from many booths, however, were titles for the 8-bit ATARI. EVERYONE is bullish on the ST, it appears, but many are shying away from the XE series. EPYX has several titles for the 2600, 7800, and the ST including WINTER GAMES, but when questioned at

their booth about their lack of 8-bit titles, they responded, "ATARI won't even support their own machine, so we sure won't. The ST is different, it's the whole focus there (at ATARI) now, so that's where we are concentrating. BODYLOG, another developer who is showing some really nice hardware/software for real bodybuilding and bio-feedback in a fascinating game format called BODYLINK for the Commodore only. When asked about the ATARI, their response was one we came to hear over and over:"Oh yes, the ST. We plan to have a version out very soon." When I pressed about the 8-bit line, BODYLOG sneered, "that machine is dead. They don't even build the 800 anymore!" What about the XE, says I. "Oh, well, I suppose if it turns out to be something, we will rethink it. You have to realize, there are six million Commodores out there now." I was inclined to educate this fellow to the world of ATARI facts and figures, but I realized that if he made it to his own booth, he had to wade through the 8-bit ATARI exhibit. If he still believed that the 8-bit ATARI was dead after seeing that, I knew he was lost to reason.

Happily, not all developers feel the same way. Arthur Waslh of ARTWORX said that such attitudes were "Rediculous. ATARI support for the 8-bit line is terrific. It has been and continues to be a great performer for us." He continued, "Although the ST is getting the spotlight now from many developers, ARTWORX is activly looking for more 8-bit titles. Most of our material is submitted in C-64 format. We want more ATARI-8 software, and even have taken our programmers off of ST projects to convert Commodore titles to the small ATARI." ARTWORX has been a leader in the $10-$15 game pack range, an industry move that makes buying games on a budget much more realistic. Walsh related that porting programs between machines isn't even very hard. "STRIP POKER" (an ARTWORX title) was in fact written for the ATARI 8-bit, then ported up (graphics intact) to the IBM, AMIGA, and finally the ST.

Industry Report

MASTERTRONIC is another bottom-dollar game maker, combining excellent graphics with prices under (!) $10 a title. More than half of their titles (Including NINJA, ELEKTRAGLIDE, and THE LAST V-8)

are available as "flippies" for both the 8-bit ATARI and the Commodore, and more ATARI and ST support is coming.

GAMESTAR from ACTIVISION showed "GBA CHAMPIONSHIP BASKETBALL, TWO ON TWO" as a dramatically improved "sequel" to the top selling "ONE ON ONE". You can still only have two people playing, but each can control TWO players on the screen using pre-arranged "plays", or two can team together against the computer's two players. It is ONLY available for the Commodore. An ST version is to be out in the fall. The ATARI-8? No plans at this time. The now familiar, "we'll wait and see. But the ST, thats for sure." Sigh.

But the ATARI 8 was not the biggest outcast at the CES. Taking honors as the new machine least likely to find entertainment software: the AMIGA. Only IBM had fewer titles being shown anywhere. There was perhaps one AMIGA for every 8 ST's on display at developer tables. And what about the COMMODORE exhibit? Well, it was two floors away from the rest of the computer booths, and took up a room roughly 1/6 the size of the ATARI display. In it I found almost a dozen systems on display, with nearly as many visitors. NO AMIGA!! I asked the obvious question. "AMIGA was at the COMDEX show two weeks ago. THIS show [CES] is for consumer products." Isn't the AMIGA for consumption, I asked incredulously. "The company thinks of the AMIGA as a business and vertical market machine," the Commodore lady announced curtly. Yike! I wonder if they told anybody?

Said ANTIC MAGAZINE writer JACK POWELL in one of his CES Trade show reports: "By the way, I'm writing this report outside of the COMMODORE exhibit- it's the only place in the hall where it's quiet enough to concentrate."

COMMODORE was pushing the successful C-128 line almost exclusively. Although not on display, the new 64-C was announced to be more than just a repackaged C-64 in the sleek new box. GEOS (a GEM-like operating system) will be coming out with it, as well as some bundled software. The company is visably split, and is stepping back after putting what may have been too many eggs in the AMIGA basket. The 8-bit market is about to be freshly shaken to find new buyers. There have been noises from some corners that the AMIGA may become a self-supporting division or else have to split off entirely. Interestingly parallel with the APPLE/MAC affair. (APPLE dosen't come to CES at all. Software for their machines was similarly absent).

The ST and the 8-bit ATARI are not enjoying a totally friction-free co-existance either. Everything from clubs to magazines are feeling shock waves resulting from the "competition" between the products, with some software developers feeding the fire with "either-or" mentality. ANTIC and ANALOG are both pushing new ST sections or entire new ST magazines. Meanwhile, the 8-bit users (who are perhaps 95% of the ATARI owners) complain that as much as half or more of their favorite magazines are now about machines that they don't have and perhaps can't afford to move into. In response, ANALOG magazine (who has had an ST "magazine within a magazine") will have an EXTRA issue this fall devoted entirely to 8-bit ATARI's. Like they USED to do.

Meanwhile, COMPUTE MAGAZINE annouced a $10,000 programming contest for the ST. Representatives from these and many other computer, media, and entertainment magazines handed out free copies to the CES crowds.

DATASOFT showed ALTERNATE REALITY for the ST. They say their programmers really like the ST, while very few plans for AMIGA titles were announced. "MERCENARY" for the 8-bit ATARI was also in the DATASOFT exhibit, showing interesting vector graphics and full blown adventure gaming in three dimensions on, below, and in orbit of the planet TARG. This game of epic scale and superior backup story and paraphanalia is one of many european imports shown at CES.

Perhaps the most impressive of the imports for the ST was STARGLIDER, being marketed by FIREBIRD. It has the all-out best cockpit and starship flight simulation I have seen yet, as well as a good story and realistic action. The mouse controlled flight really gives goosebumps and butterflies. STARGLIDER comes with a novella that gives clues to survival as well as making the play all the more satisfying.

Speaking of flight simulation, the ST, and satisfaction, SUBLOGIC (makers of FLIGHT SIMULATOR) showed their 3D Graphics package for the IBM. It is capable of commercial grade animation within 256K. They showed various screens with moving models and sweeping "camera" viewpoint similar to those in the Mick Jagger video "Hard Woman to Leave". I asked about plans for the package for the ST. "Well, there doesn't seem to be much call for the graphics package for non-IBM machines. But if enough people ask for it, we may put FLIGHT SIMULATOR out for the ST this fall. At exactly that moment, a 50-ish gentleman came up and asked "how soon will this package or FLIGHT SIMULATOR be available for the ST?" His name tag identified him as a retailer. From Sears and Roebuck. Ever hear of them?

The world is asking. The ST is answering!.

VOS ist DOS??

by Leo Sell

Please forgive the fractured German. Every now and then I realize how confusing a computer and terms such as DOS, etc, are to the newer users. This article is a small attempt to lift some of the confusion surrounding Atari DOS 2.0/2.5. I have tried to make it as basic as possible.

TRAINING MANUAL FOR DOS 2.0/2.5

Boot a disk containing DOS 2.0 or 2.5. From BASIC, type DOS and press Return. The following menu will appear on the screen:

DISK OPERATING SYSTEM II VERSION 2.X
COPYRIGHT 1984 ATARI CORP

A. DISK DIRECTORY	I. FORMAT DISK
B. RUN CARTRIDGE	J. DUPLICATE DISK
C. COPY FILE	K. BINARY SAVE
D. DELETE FILE(S)	L. BINARY LOAD
E. RENAME FILE	M. RUN AT ADDRESS
F. LOCK FILE	N. CREATE MEM.SAVE
G. UNLOCK FILE	O. DUPLICATE FILE
H. WRITE DOS FILES	P. FORMAT SINGLE

An explanation of the menu items follows:

A. DISK DIRECTORY - This option allows you to display or print a list of the files on a disk. You can see all or part of the filenames and send the directory to any valid device such as E: (Screen Editor) or P: (Printer). The default is: show all files (*.*), on the Screen Editor (E:). To see what I mean, type A and press Return twice. A list of all files on the disk will scroll down the screen. If there are a large number of files you may need to pause and start the scrolling using Control-1.

The odd characters I have already used (*.*) are called wild cards. They are useful when you want to limit the directory search. The asterisk is used to replace any combination of characters. For instance, to show only files with a .BAS extender, type A and press Return once. At the

prompt, type *.BAS and press Return. Only files bearing a .BAS extender will be displayed. (By the way, an extender is the character(s) following the period in a file name; you may have a maximum of 3 letters in an extender).

For a printed listing of the directory, type A and press Return. At the prompt type *.*,P: and press Return. This will result in a list of all file names on the disk printing out. Of course, you can limit the directory search in the same way previously mentioned. Use the same syntax to send a copy of the directory to any valid device. If you want a copy of the directory as a disk file, repond to the prompt with
.,D1:FILENAME.TXT

The comma is often important as a divider. If a comma shows in a prompt, it is probably necessary in your response.

B. RUN CARTRIDGE - This option exits DOS and returns control to the cartridge. Usually any program that was in memory before going to DOS, must be reloaded.

C. COPY FILE - Use this option to copy a file between devices. For instance, to copy a file from drive 1 to drive 2, type C and press Return. When the From, To prompt appears type:
D1:FILENAME.EXT,D2:FILENAME.EXT and Return.
Don't forget the comma and don't add any extra spaces. The file names need not be identical and you can also copy to devices other than a disk drive. The most common use would be in printing documentation (.DOC or .TXT extenders) files without a word processor. To copy to the printer, respond to the From, To prompt with:
D1:FILENAME.EXT,P: and Return.
Two last notes. Wildcards can be used with the

copy option. For instance, copy all .BAS files by responding with D1:*.BAS,D2:*.BAS. Another thing to note is that this option is not suitable for copying a file from and to the same disk (unless you want a second copy under a different name). To copy a single file use option O.

D. DELETE FILE(S) - This option allows you to eliminate unwanted files from the disk. Be sure that the file is not longer of use before deleting it - this option should be considered permanent. To delete a file, type D and press Return. At the prompt, type the filename and press Return. In a few moments, the dirty deed is done.

E. RENAME FILE - You can use this when you want to rename a file. Type E and press Return. When prompted, type the Old name, and the New name separated by a comma. Wild cards are operable, but be very judicious in their use.

F. LOCK FILE

G. UNLOCK FILE - Another name for these options is Protect and Unprotect. Locking a file protects it agains accidental deletion, renaming and overwriting (but not against being formatted over). To protect all files on a disk, type F and press Return. At the prompt, type *.* and press Return. DOS will then lock all files. When you next look at the directory, you will see asterisks beside each of the locked files. Notice that wildcards may be used. For instance, to protect only the .BAS files, respond to the prompt with *.BAS, and press Return.

These same procedures hold true for Unlock as well.

H. WRITE DOS FILES - DOS files are necessary for a disk to boot on the computer. Insert a formatted disk in the drive, type H and press Return. Follow the prompts to write the files DOS.SYS and DUP.SYS. DOS will ask S which drive number to write the files to. After the files are written, the disk can then be booted on its own.

I. FORMAT DISK - Formatting a disk prepares it for use by the disk drive and computer. At this point there is a significant difference between DOS 2.0 and 2.5. When you use this option in DOS 2.0, the disk is formatted in single density and can hold 90K of information. DOS 2.5 formats in "dual density". Dual density is also referred to as density and a half. The disk will hold about 140K of information. However, a caveat...DON'T USE DUAL DENSITY!! In DOS 2.5, use option P and format the disk in single density. Dual density is not compatible with all disk drives. If you use dual density, you may regret it. Use either single-density or a DOS with true double-density.

J. DUPLICATE DISK - This option can be used to duplicate a disk, but I would recommend you use one of the copy programs from the C.H.A.O.S. Library. For example, Copymate is far more flexible and powerful than this option.

K. BINARY SAVE - Option K is used primarily by Machine Language programmers.

L. BINARY LOAD - This option allows you to load a machine lanquage file. Once loaded it will automatically run. To use this option, type L and press Return. When the prompt appears, enter the filename (wildcards are allowed) and press Return. Most M/L files will have an extender of .OBJ, .COM or .EXE.

M. RUN AT ADDRESS

N. CREATE MEM.SAV - Both option M and N are for more advanced programming uses.

O. DUPLICATE FILE -This is the option to use when you are duplicating a single file on a single disk drive. Type O and press Return. DOS will

prompt you for the file name to be duplicated. Large files may need to be read twice, so watch the prompts carefully.

P. FORMAT SINGLE - This option is exclusive to DOS 2.5. It allows you to format (stongly recommended) in single density. Always use option P rather than option I when using DOS 2.5.

Well, there is more to be said, but that's enough for this month. Next month we'll try to deal with a few more facts and hints for DOS such as common error messages and how to append one file to another.

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C.H.A.O.S. June Meeting Minutes
by Gary Ferris

Summer is here and it's normal effect was observed in a lighter turnout than recent months- about 50 in attendance. We do welcome the three new members who did come and sign up (rather than go to a boring old beach).

We were treated to a side by side comparison between the ST and Amiga computers and shown some of the strengths of both systems.

The disk of the month was demoed and had NEW games and utilities. We also introduced the newest release from Keith Ledbetter, "MPP EXPRESS" for MPP modems. It's available now (like EXPRESS 1030 and 850) in our library.

We had 1020 printers available with a disk of programs that take advantage of its capabilities for $30. We still have some available, I suggest getting with John Nagy ASAP. These prices are only for C.H.A.O.S. members!

Our treasury took a beating this month with a printer for the newsletter editor, getting the 1020s and startup costs on the new news magazine, but now stands at a healthy $678.68. With the additional monies we should receive from sales of products on hand, we look forward to being able to do some exciting things for the membership in the future.

Disk Library

THE LIBRARY TABLE

By John Baker

Summer. Aaahhh, a time to get outside and enjoy yourself. Take care of those projects that you have been planning for all winter. Besides, nothing new or important happens as far as computers during the summer, right? Wrong!!!

The C.H.A.O.S. library is in the midst of a massive rework and will continue this project thru the summer. What this means to you as a member, is a far greater selection of new software. The total number of disks that will be available to you have doubled and in some sections even tripled.

One additional item that bears mentioning, is the fact that now all disk sales are limited to members only. Since members are the main supporting factor for the library, we feel this policy is in their best interest.

A constant influx of new programs from the BBS, as well as software trades with some of the largest and best known users groups in the country is resulting in a library that we feel will be second to none.

New and unique files are selected each month and placed on our "Disk of the Month" feature disk. Many times these files have been received only days before the disk is made up. Certain files on our Disk of the Month will only be available on that disk, and will not provided on the BBS. Fourteen disks (12 monthly + 2 Special disks) for only $50.00 is an exceptional bargain!

By publishing our own newsletter, we should have sufficient room to feature a library disk monthly review section, and provide more detailed information on certain files.

Remember, we have one of the best selections of software and instructions for upgrading your 800, 800XL, or 130XE, and a disk full of this software in included in the purchase price of the upgrade kits that we offer. We have compiled a disk full of software for use with the 1020 printer/plotter. This disk will be included free in the purchase price of the 1020's which we now have for sale.

We are pulling out all stops to make the C.H.A.O.S. library your complete Atari resource. Check with us, we feel that you will be pleasantly surprised. Any questions or comments on the library are welcome and encouraged. And if you have public domain software that we are lacking, and feel it would make a good addition to our files, please send it in.

Atari Technical

The following is reprinted from an unknown newsletter. Our apologies for not giving proper credit.

DISK USERS:
DON'T LET THIS HAPPEN TO YOU!

by Jery White

While working on a BASIC program very late one night, I had saved quite a few versions of my program using filenames such as "D:TEST1" and "D:TEST2". Shortly before sunrise, I decided to call it a day. I saved the most current version of my still unfinished program as "D:TEST8". I then realized that I had previously saved a version called "D:TEST9", and that I had better clean up my work disk before shutting my bloodshot eyes.

I called DOS and took a quick look at the directory file. With my fingers running much faster than my brain, I renamed TEST8, TEST9. After pressing Return, I realized that I now had two programs with the filename TEST9. since I wasn't sure which TEST9 program was the most current, I decided to rename one of them as "TEMP". Much to my surprise, DOS renamed both "TEST9" programs as "TEMP". Now what?

I went back to BASIC and loaded "TEMP". Knowing the program in RAM was the first version of the "TEMP" found in the directory file, I listed it onto the screen to see if it was the most current version. No such luck. It was the second version of "TEMP" that I needed. Bat's breath!

I then tried to solve my problem by going dack to DOS and deleting the first "TEMP". This was just not my night. DOS deleted both my "TEMP" in the directory file. I had solved my problem but I was more than a bit cranky. It just seemed to be absurd that DOS should rename more than one filename at a time. Before getting to sleep that morning, I vowed to correct the situation so that it couldn't happen again.

Again a quick look at COMPUTE's "Inside" ATARI DOS, I found that I could correct this problem by simply eliminating one BCC instruction. This can be done using two NOPs. (Editor's note: Huh?). If you'd like to change DOS.SYS version 2.0s so that RENAME affects only one file, just follow these instructions:

With your ATARI BASIC cartridge in place, boot up using a disk that contains DOS 2.0s. At the BASIC ready prompt, in immediate mode, enter the following commands then press Return.

POKE 3117,234:POKE 3118,234:X=USR(8309)

Note that the DOS utilities did not have to reload from disk. Since no deferred mode lines of BASIC were entered and no program was loaded, DUP.SYS was unaltered and still in RAM. We simply jumped into DUP.SYS with that immediate mode USR command.

In order to make our patch to DOS permanent, use the "H" function to "write" DOS "files".

Editor's Note

by Jeff Bone

Welcome fellow Atarians to the premier issue of the "Mid Michigan Atari Magazine". It looks good doesn't it?

Finally, a magazine completely devoted to your favorite computer. Is it a dream come true? If so, how long can it last? The answer is simple. As long as YOU continue to support it.

Support is not just plunking down your hard earned money at the local news stand to purchase it. Nor, is it simply joining a local Atari club to get it delivered to your door. This magazine NEEDS your participation and input. We need YOU.

"But, what can I do?", you say. I'm glad you asked. Remember all those frustrating hours in front of your keyboard trying to de-bug a program? Then, you discovered a neat programming short cut. Or, a memory saving sub-routine. Don't just keep it to yourself. Write it down and share it with us.

Perhaps you've purchased some dynamic software. Tell us about it. Let us know if it really is worth skipping the next mortgage payment.

Maybe you've developed a great technical fix for your malfunctioning keyboard. Tell us how you did it. You are probably not the only one with that problem.

If you are wondering how to submit articles, here's how:

The preferred way is to upload your article to the C.H.A.O.S. BBS and leave a message to me or the Sysop.

The next best way is to pass a disk with your article on it, to me, the President or the Vice-President.

Articles submitted in printed form are not likely to be used until the article can be re-keyed and loaded from disk. Obviously a lot of extra work for someone.

Also, an effort is being made to incorporate other mid Michigan Atari clubs to participate in this magazine. The benefits would be tremendous. More pages of information, agreater pool of resources, and additional support. And YOU will be the one to benefit. So, don't be surprized if you see new names in future issues.

Until next time, good computing...

Telecom

DOWNLOAD

By John Nagy

Summer weather has taken its usual toll on the BBS usage. We are down to under a thousand calls a month (!!!) That's still one call every 45 minutes, day and night, seven days a week. Much of our volume is national calls checking out our top selection of texts and software for memory upgrades. We have over 50 files of this type in all, and most are online at all times.

We had been having a great deal of trouble getting the BBS to work the way we want at 1200 baud. This is due to simultaneous conversion to SPARTADOS, double sided drives, a new 1200 baud modem, BASIC XE, and a 256K 800XL. Gary Ferris has gotten into the act, and with his help we have gotten it to come together now. We have it working now and online, but don't be surprised if there is a bug or two left...

Look for hot news on the BBS weeks before you get it in the newsletter, and in much greater detail! We regularly get news and articles from ANTIC ONLINE and other telecommunication services, and they will be available in far greater length than we can fit in the newsletter, where we are forced to summarize.

A VIDEO and AUDIO message base is now online! Join us in the new "SIGHTS AND SOUNDS" BASE for reviews, trivia, exchange of video tapes, MIDI and CD info, etc. Guy Hurt got the tape rolling on this one in our GENERAL MESSAGE base along with Mitch Wells, and with the new BBS developments, there is now room for "one more" as well as now allowing many more messages in each base.

REMEMBER: The CHAOS BBS is there for you at all times with the latest information, entertainment, and hottest new programs for your ATARI! Call it today! (517) 371-1106!

ST

ST-UTTERINGS

by Brian Goluska

I would like to thank all ST contributors and participants in the May Computer Club show in Lansing. We went a long way in showing that the ST has a great volume of software available. For those who missed the show, we had 3 520's and a 1040, 3 of those in color and 1 monochrome. And a MIDI! Anyone who was at the show early should know that we initially had the MIDI in F-sharp and the ST in C-flat for the first hour until our music expert arrived. It sounded much better later when the ST and the MIDI were in harmony.

Hot items for the ST are TOS in ROM, ramdisks, and 1 Meg upgrades. Everyone should have TOS in ROM. Everyone should get ramdisk software. While 1 Meg ST's are attractive, there was some reluctance at our last meeting to doing the upgrade. The price (only about $50 to go from 1/2 Meg to 1 Meg) is very nice. The idea of piggybacking the memory chips, and changing the traces on the system board seems to cause some hesitation. Most of us have only 1 ST, and the chance of introducing a problem into a working machine is scary.

The ST special interest group of CHAOS meets the second Saturday of each month. The ST meetings are much less structured than the regular CHAOS meetings, both because there are not so many people and because the ST owners need to trade information and discuss topics informally so much more. Right now we have about a dozen ST owners at a meeting, and a couple of people who are considering ST's.

At the last meeting, Mike Clewley's 10 Meg hard disk was demoed. It was an "actual Atari" hard disk, although there weren't any Atari logos on it. The demo showed very fast processing; SLIDESHOW, for instance, ran very quickly. Lots of rumors were discussed. We saw a demo of the A-CALC spreadsheet and dbMan. A-CALC seemed OK, although not as powerful as VIP Professional (which is a 1 for 1 LOTUS look alike). dbMan is much like dBase II/III, but not a look-alike in that commands and syntax are unique.

Among a fair amount of literature from the CES was a copy of START Magazine, the ST quarterly that ANTIC is publishing. At $59.95 for 4 issues with a 3 1/2 inch disk included, and 12 issues of ANTIC, the magazine seems to offer a lot. Unlike ANTIC, START will not print program listings, but will instead include a disk with each magazine.

Much of the rest of the meeting was taken up discussing odds and ends of various software packages. While discussing First Word it was mentioned that superscripts and subscripts are difficult to use (mouse invoked, while keyboard would be better), and also don't show on the screen. Well, on a monochrome monitor on the ST superscripts and subscripts do show on the screen (what-you-see is what-you-get on super- and subscripting). In fact, now that I have both a monochrome and a color monitor, I really appreciate the monochrome for certain tasks, word processing especially.

At the close of our meeting, Time Bandit was shown. I'll close with a quick review: Time Bandit from MichTron. Advertised at $39.95. Color monitor only. Arcade game, with internal puzzles. One or two players. One player uses joystick or keyboard, two players use joysticks. Time Bandit gives your player(s) a choice of 16 different adventures. Each time you return to an adventure, it gets tougher (but it might offer more opportunity). Some of the adventures are complex (a starship; a packman; a search for a crown...). Beginning format is run and shoot, "anything that moves is hostile", except in a two player game it's best to avoid shooting your partner. The screen is split, so each player can wander away, but see each other if they're in the same area. Later there are puzzles to be solved. (Where is the crew of the starship Excalibur?) Humor and satire are included. (Don't transport objects into deep space.) Best of all, the animation is well done. One problem with Time Bandit is that it has a glitch that now and then ends the game unexpectedly - the game goes into attract mode sometimes in the middle of play. This is most annoying if you are doing well. Despite the glitch, Time Bandit is, in my opinion, the best arcade game so far for the ST.

Just Starting

Got a New Atari ST? Some Quick Hints

by Brian Goluska

The Atari ST, using the mouse and GEM, is quite a bit different from your Atari 800, Commodore C-64, or IBM. And while the IBM and compatibles can run a mouse and GEM, most people using IBM type computers are only familiar with MS-DOS type environments. So here are some quick hints that may help you with your ST.

OPENING, CLOSING, AND DIRECTORIES

If you have an open directory on the screen, drive A for instance, you don't have to close A, switch physical disks, and open A again. Instead, switch disks and press the ESC key. This will give a directory of the new disk. Similarly, many programs display their own directory box. A quick way to check for files is to click on the directory entry, backspace and make changes, and then click on the shaded name bar. For example, in BASIC, the default will be a directory of *.BAS. If you change the name to *.*, you can click on the title bar and see all files on that disk.

DELETING OR COPYING SELECTED FILES

Have you played with the ghost window, trying to get exactly the files you want to delete or copy? An easier way is to shift-click on the files you want - this method allows you to get each file specifically. To delete, Hold the shift key down and click on the first file to delete. It will become highlighted. Keep the shift key down, and move to and click the next file. You now have two separated but highlighted file names. Continue until all desired files are highlighted. Now let the shift key up, and click and hold on a highlighted field. The entire field can now be dragged to the trash can or to another drive.

GEMSYS OFF AND ON

Do you know that an Atari 800 is about 30 % faster with the display turned off? Of course you knew. The ST has a similar feature in the Gemsys Gemflag. On the 800, the processor stopped when the screen needed to be displayed, and could run without screen interrupts if you turned the display off. In ST BASIC, you can turn significant overhead off by telling it to ignore the screen, mouse, and keyboard.
POKE SYSTAB+24,1:REMARK TURN GEMFLAG OFF
POKE SYSTAB+24,0:REMARK TURN IT BACK ON
Of course, save your file before running it. If your program does something unexpected, and your keyboard and mouse are turned off, you have no choice but a system boot.

I CAN'T READ LINES I CHANGE

Changed lines in BASIC show up in a separate video style. Unfortunately, the default may be a

style that is hard to read. The solution is on page C-141 of the BASIC manual. It shows how to change the "ghost line" style to whatever you want. I like:
POKE SYSTAB+2,1:REMARK THICKENED
Caution: The table on page C-141 is the bit number, not the decimal value. Bit number 3, underlined, would be a decimal value of 8 for the poke.

THE SCROLL BAR

The right hand scroll bar shows you where your view of a file relates to the entire file. There are many ways of using it, besides the scroll arrows. Clicking on the shaded area on the scroll bar will give you one "view" forward or back in the document (depending on the program your're running). The best way to use the bar, however, is to "grab" the window. That is, click on the white window area and hold the mouse button down. Then you can move your view area to where you want. This is especially important when you're reading or changing large files.

LEARNING THE RETURN KEY

On non-GEM machines, the RETURN key most often executes the command. Learning when the RETURN or an ST executes a command, and when it cancels the command, takes some practice. For example, in "Installing an Application", you must click the mouse on "OK" to execute. The RETURN key cancels the installation. On the other hand, if the "Insert Disk B in Drive A" display is on the screen, the RETURN key will execute the command, and is easier than using the mouse, especially when "disk flipping" to copy a lot of files. Which brings up another important topic.

TOS IN ROM AND RAMDISKS

If you don't have TOS in ROM, get it! It makes a world of difference, adding around 200K useable memory. Then, with TOS in ROM, buy a Ramdisk program (if you can't write one or find a public domain one). If you have only one drive, Ramdisk is a necessity, not a luxury. For instance, it takes 3 passes and "disk flips" to copy a file with one drive, one for the open, one for the copy, and one for the close. If you have 10 little files to copy, it is a long boring process. With a Ramdisk, it's one human step to copy to the Ramdisk, and one step to copy from the Ramdisk to the target floppy. The following are hints for BASIC programmers:

ONLY VOICE 1 WORKS IN BASIC

Use the WAVE ENABLE command to enable voices before you use them. BASIC defaults to voice 1 enabled, voices 2 and 3 off.

RND FUNCTION RETURNS A "1"

Most of us expect RND(0) to return a value between 0 and .99999, and expect an expression like 100*RND(0) to return a value between 0 and 99. Unexpectedly, RND(0) in ST BASIC will sometimes return the value "1", and the programmer must take this into account.

STRING DIMENSIONS WORK DIFFERENTLY

On the Atari 800, strings were dimensioned with the length of the string. On the ST, strings can grow dynamically, and the dimension is the number of strings with that name. In 800 BASIC, the phrase DIM A$(155) will give 1 string 155 bytes long. In ST BASIC the same phrase will give 155 strings. If you fill A$(n) one byte at a time, you will get 155 one byte strings, with several bytes of overhead for each! So if you are loading your 800 programs onto your ST, watch out for your strings.

I hope the above will help new ST owners get started quickly, especially if they can't make it to the CHAOS ST meetings, or don't live in an area with an Atari club.

SIDENOTE

Antic Magazine gives an address to get those hard to find 13 pin ST connectors and other cables:

Alpha Products
5740 Corsa Ave
Westlake Village, CA 91362

Review

COMMODORE MOUSE CONTROLLER FOR YOUR ATARI!
(Or- The Mouse That Jack Built)
by Jay Pierstorff

There has been much talk of mice and mouse controllers lately. The new Atari ST's come equipped with their own mouse (mice? meeces?). Anyway, those of us who have an Atari of the 8-bit persuasion have watched with great envy, wishing we too, could have mice. Even if we could buy an ST mouse for our 8-bitters (which we can't) it wouldn't work with our existing "joystuck" programs.

But while wandering the aisles of the computer stores, I noticed a Commodore product beaming through the glass. "The Commodore 1350 Mouse for the C128" was printed on the package. The price was less than $50. Those lucky 128 owners! Too bad Atari hasn't made one for their computers.

The Commodore and the Atari have always been real friendly about using the same joystick varieties. Would this... could this... might this mouse work? The plug looked very much like a standard joystick connector. I bought it and took it home.

I could tell my Atari 130XE was nervous about the whole works, but undaunted, I loaded a trackball program, plugged in the mouse... but wait, the plug would not stay in! Upon close examination of the connector, I discovered that it was about 1/8 of an inch too short to reach the connector pins, (Commodore computers don't recess their joystick ports quite as much as Atari). I was Puzzled for a moment and then I thought about using a joystick extension cable! Ha! I quickly found my extension cable and plugged one end into port 1 and the other end plugged perfectly to the mouse!

With trembling fingers I slid the mouse across the desk, and then... nothing. The cursor was on the screen but the mouse yawned. It would not control the cursor, not even a little. Now what... I tried to think, maybe it would work with a Koala or Touch Tablet program! I booted and failed.

Maybe it was a "joystick emulator!" A Joystick in mouse clothing! I loaded the graphics editor of The Print Shop, IT WORKED! IT WAS A JOYSTICK EMULATOR ALL ALONG! Suddenly, it occurred to me I should probably calm down. I got down off the computer table and tried a few more programs. Everything that would normally run with a joystick, was working with this imitation mouse.

The only non-workable feature of the 1350 Mouse is the right button. The left button is the standard "fire" button on a Joystick. The right button is connected to pin 9 (the Atari paddle controller pin).

The Commodore Mouse is very usable. Even though your computer thinks it's a joystick, you will think it's a mouse! It really does an amazing job of convincing you! It feels good in your hand and moves smoothly across any flat surface. A clean desk or a "mouse pad" will give best results. A mouse pad is a rubber backed thin cushion that gives more control over mouse movements. For mouse maintenance, the rubber-coated, steel ball can be easily removed for cleaning.

The 1350 Mouse is different from a true optical driven mouse. A true mouse has proportional control. The faster you move the mouse, the faster the cursor will move. The 1350 mimics this action but it can't move the cursor any faster than a joystick would. Slower cursor movements are imitated by the mouse delivering short, stop and go pulses to the computer.

A true mouse will always take the same desktop travel to move the cursor from one screen edge to the other. The 1350 will move the cursor at maximum speed as long as the 1350 is in any motion at any speed. That means a fast, long push may not move the cursor as far as a short, slow push! That's not really a problem though, it's just a differenc e that can be worked with. It can even be an advantage for limited desktop space.

The Commodore 1350 Mouse worked with all games and programs that require a joystick. Some are improved by the mouse and some are more suited to joystick control. The type of programs that are best suited to the mouse are those that require precision movements of cursor or gunsight centering on the screen. The least suited are the programs requiring continuous scrolling movements. They often require picking the mouse up and starting again if you run out of counter space. Drawing and doodling programs worked fabulous, Koronis Rift scores improved markedly, Rescue on Fractalus was confusing! Donkey Kong was ...different! It just depends on the type of movement involved. Many games took on a whole new feel when played with the mouse. Many were even more fun with a mouse than with a joystick !

Do you really need a mouse? Yes you do! If you own and use a joystick, you will definitely enjoy owning a 1350 mouse. I wouldn't part with mine. Don't throw your joystick away yet, but mine is seeing less use since I let the mouse in the house! The Commodore mouse is not just for the C128 anymore! It's one of the best darn joysticks since the old Atari licorice stick!

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Atari Technical

PEEKS AND POKES

by Kenneth J. Pietrucha - JACG

Last month's column showed you how to poke the sound registers instead of using the SO. or sound command. If you missed this column, go back and read it. It's short and will be worth your time.

If you have any musical ability, you will soon realize that some of the notes or tones generated by the ATARI are slightly off pitch. What I want to show you this month is how to combine two of the voices to generate a single precision note.

The demonstration program is divided into two parts. The first part does the simple mathematical calculations that are poked in part two and generate the actual sound.

First, the desired precision tone frequency, in cycles, is entered as F. The program then performs an intermediate calculation for (AUDF), the control rate. The variable, AUDF, is then used to calculate the course and fine frequency that will be poked to give us our precision tone.

The pitch is a calculation of the tone that will result when FINE and COURSE are combined. Pitch is not needed for the system to operate and may be deleted.

After the calculations are made, the sound registers of voice 0 and 1 are set to off. Location 53768 is poked with 80 to turn the clock on and combine voice 0 and 1.

The frequency of FINE is poked in 53760 or Voice 0, while COURSE is poked in 53762 or Voice 1. The precision tone is heard for a few seconds, then the sound is turned off.

The program will generate sounds up to approximately 64 KHZ in frequency. This is far above your range of hearing and may not be too popular with your dog.

The same technique can be used to calculate another precision tone using the remaining two voices. Once you have two precision tones, you can use them to generate the tones to dial your phone. I have written programs to dial my phone by holding the mouth piece near the monitor speaker. It may not be practical, but it did prove that the accuracy of the tones was present. The North American standard is ± 1.5% for the digit generators.

```
 1 REM PRECISION SOUND
 2 REM BY KENNETH J. PIETRUCHA
 3 REM J.A.C.G. 11/6/85
 5 GRAPHICS 0
 7 COARSE=0:FINE=0
10 ? "THIS PROGRAM CALCULATES THE TWO"
15 ? "FREQS NEEDED FOR PRECISION"
20 ? "SOUND CLOCKED AT 1.789790 MHZ."
22 ?
23 ?
25 ? "ENTER THE FREQUENCY DESIRED"
30 INPUT F:AUDF=(1789790/(F*2))-7
40 COARSE=INT(AUDF/256)
50 FINE=INT((AUDF)-(256*COARSE)+0.5)
60 ? CHR$(125)
70 ? "THE DESIRED FREQ IS ";F
72 ?
75 ? "THE TWO INTERMEDIATE FREQS ARE:"
80 ? "       COARSE= ";COARSE
85 ? "         FINE= ";FINE
87 ?
88 ?
90 PITCH=1789790/(2*(256*COARSE+FINE+7))
100 ? "THESE TWO FREQS RESULT IN A"
105 ? "PRECISION FREQ OF ";PITCH
110 ?
115 ?
130 ? "PRESS START TO PERFORM ANOTHER "
132 ?"CALCULATION"
133 ?
134 ?
140 ? "PRESS OPTION TO HEAR THE TONE"
142 ? "GENERATED BY THE LAST CALCULATIONS"
145 X=PEEK(53279)
147 IF X=7 THEN 145
148 IF X=6 THEN GOTO 5
149 IF X=3 THEN GOTO 200
200 ? CHR$(125)
210 POKE 53761:REM SET VOICE 0 OFF
211 POKE 53763:REM SET VOICE 1 OFF
220 POKE 53768,80:REM SELECT THE CLOCK FREQ,
AND JOIN VOICE 0 AND 1
230 POKE  53761,160:POKE  53763,168:REM  SET
DIST. AND VOL.:REM TURN UP VOL.
235 POKE 752,1:REM TURN OFF CURSOR
240 POSITION 4,8
241 ? "FREQUENCY HEARD IS "; PITCH
260 POKE 53760,FINE:REM POKE VOICE 0
270 POKE 53762,COARSE:REM POKE VOICE 1
280 FOR X=1 TO 500:NEXT X:REM PLAY TONE  FOR
A TIME
290 POKE 53761,160:REM TURN OFF VOICE 0
291 POKE 53763,160:REM TURN OFF VOICE 1
295 GOTO 5:REM START OVER
```

The locations to poke for the other two voices can be found in "Mapping the Atari". This is pretty heavy stuff, so go slowly.

LIGHTNING PROTECTION

-- Brad Piatt --

Lightning causes potentially damaging voltage spikes on power and telephone lines. When lightning struck near my home, I did some research on the best and most economical way to protect my computer equipment. The very best method of protecting your equipment is to unplug the system and disconnect it from the phone line when it is not in use. When your computer is in use it can be protected from lightning surges on power and phone lines very econically with the following system.

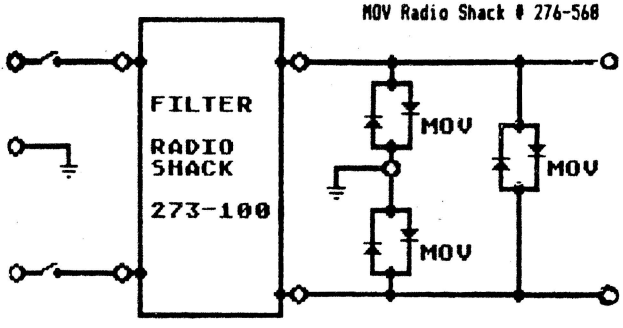
First, I installed a McGraw-Edison surge arrestor (AS260B) in my breaker box. (Follow the instructions in the box or call an electrician.) The arrestor takes care of the heavy stuff.

Next, I modified a power strip to provide surge protection and filtering. The drawing below details the hookup. The double-pole switch provides complete isolation of the system when it is not in use. The filter reduces the level of any spikes on the line and eliminates any radio interference on the power line. Place a 5 Amp fuse before the filter; the fuse will blow and alert you if the MOV's fail and reduce your protection.

The MOV's (metal oxide varistors) are the heart of the system. The electrical resistance of the MOV's change as the power line voltage increases. If the line voltage goes above 130 volts, the MOV's "short out" the transient. By absorbing the transients, the MOV's protect your equipment. Your phone line can be protected using a similar array of MOV's. Place one MOV across the line from tip to ring and one MOV from each conductor to ground.

The parts are readily available at your local Radio Shack. I think this system provides greater protection than expensive "surge protectors" at less than 10% of the cost.

MOV Radio Shack # 276-568



POWER STRIP FILTER

Programs

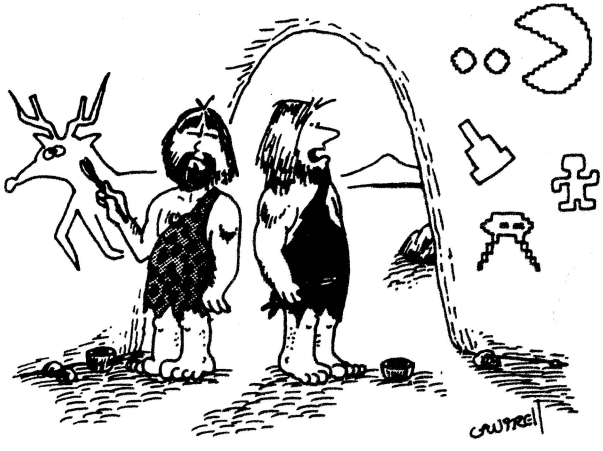
VORTEX

by Mark Price - SBACE

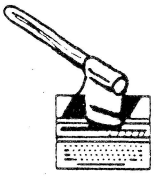
Vortex creates a hypnotic pattern on the screen. The picture seems to be going away from you as it tries to draw you into the TV screen. Just type it in and RUN.

You are feeling very, very sleepy...

```
10 REM *** VORTEX ***
12 REM *** BY MARK PRICE - SBACE ***
200 GRAPHICS 23:SETCOLOR 4,6,4
210 FOR I=1536 TO 1565:READ J:POKE I,J:NEXT I
212 REM *** INSTALL DLI ROUTINE ***
220 J=PEEK(560)+256*PEEK(561)
222 REM *** SET DLI FLAGS ON ALL DISPLAY LINES
230 POKE J+3,205
240 FOR I=J+6 TO J+99:POKE I,141:NEXT I
250 POKE 512,0:POKE 513,6:POKE 54286,192
252 REM *** ENABLE THE DLI ROUTINE ***
299 REM *** PLOT CONTROL ***
300 COLOR 1:GOSUB 400:REM *** PLOT X ON
310 COLOR 0:GOSUB 400:GOTO 300
312 REM *** PLOT X OFF AND CYCLE BACK ***
399 REM *** PLOT CYCLE
400 POKE 77,128:FOR I=79 TO 0 STEP -1
410 PLOT 80,47:DRAWTO 159-I,1
420 PLOT 79,48:DRAWTO 1,95
430 PLOT 79,47:DRAWTO 1,1
440 PLOT 80,48:DRAWTO 159-I,95
450 NEXT I:RETURN
499 REM *** DATA FOR DLI ***
500 DATA 72,173,11,212,201,63,144,9
510 DATA 173,0,210,181,20,208,7,240
520 DATA 5,173,0,210,229,20,141,10
530 DATA 212,141,22,208,104,64
```



"GEE, MY WIFE DOESN'T LIKE THEM, EITHER. MAYBE I'M JUST AHEAD OF MY TIME."

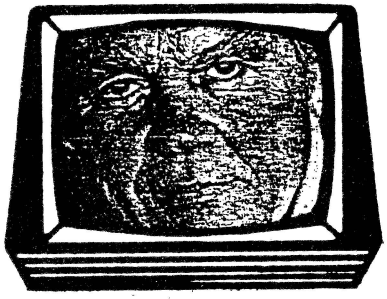


Last Hacks

A Comment from Andy

A Parody of "A Few Moments with Andy Rooney"

J'ever notice all the fuss everyone is making over computers these days? It seems you can't go anywhere with out hearing "home computer this" or "personal computer that". Why is that? What's so great about computers, anyway?



J'ever notice everyone says "you need a computer" or "nine out of ten homes will soon have a computer"? Why do I need a computer? And why will nine in ten homes have one? Is the government going to pass a law or something? Right now, the only one on my block that has one is seventeen years old, weighs ninety-eight pounds, wears glasses and has acne. He is a "NERD". J'ever notice how popular NERDS have become? Why is that? Maybe because they have computers, which are popular too. If I buy a computer will I become popular? Or will I become a NERD?

J'ever notice there are "home" computers and there are "personal" computers? Why is that? Are they the same or are they different? Can you use a home computer outside your home? Do you have to keep a personal computer to yourself, or can you share it with friends? There are also "LAP-TOP" computers. Are they for people who can't afford a desk?

J'ever notice people who use computers are called "HACKERS"? Just what is a hacker, anyway? To me, it sounds like someone you wouldn't want to meet in a dark alley. When I think of HACKER I think of Jason in "Friday the 13th". He hacked people with a large knife and lived in the woods. Did he have a computer? Was it a "FOREST" computer?

J'ever notice if a computer is easy to understand it is called "USER FRIENDLY"? Why is that? Does that mean that easy to understand is the same as friendly? If Jason comes up to me and says, "I'm going to hack you up with my knife", I can sure UNDERSTAND him, but I don't think he is very FRIENDLY. Why is that?

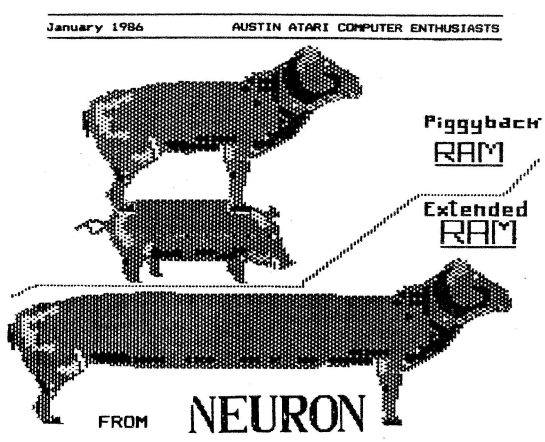
My friend, the Nerd, once told me, "My computer speaks BASIC, FORTRAN, and LISP." I don't know about BASIC and FORTRAN, but if his computer has a LISP, why doesn't he take it to a speech therapist? Come to think of it, the Nerd has a lisp, too.

J'ever notice all those computer commercials on TV? Alan Alda showed how easy to understand an ATARI computer is. Atari must be "friendly". William Shatner presses a button on a Commodore computer and he disintegrates! Commodore doesn't sound very friendly to me. Maybe Jason has one. Charlie Chaplin does a commercial for IBM. Why is that? I mean, he was born in the 1800's. They didn't even have computers then.

And finally, j'ever notice how stupid they name computers nowadays? They used to call them ENIAC or UNIVAC. I could relate to that. But, now they are called things like Apples or Oranges or Apricots. When I eat apricots I get the runs. If I use an Apricot computer will I get the runs? Then you've got the TI 99/4A. What the heck is a 99/4A anyway? Isn't that Dolly Parton's size? The Nerd has a TRS 80. But, he calls it a TRASH 80. If it was trash why did he buy it in the first place? Do only Nerds buy TRASH 80's?

Well, that about does it for now. J'ever notice how many times I say "J'ever notice"? Why is that? J'ever notice I always say "Why is that"? Why is that?

Reprinted from May 1985 HACK
Atari Anonymous of Rhode Island User Group



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